

During a week when the President addressed the nation on the Gulf Spill and our nation's energy future, Congressional Committees grilled BP and other Big Oil executives, and Congressional Democrats worked to ensure that BP is fully and legally liable for all natural resources and economic damages caused by the spill, Congressional Republicans held a press conference...to call for more offshore drilling.

I will say one thing about Republicans: when it comes to energy policy, they're consistent. Consistently wrong, to be sure, but consistent in their steadfast belief in offshore drilling.

In the wake of the worst environmental disaster in our history, it appears they either have learned no lesson from the catastrophe, or they've walked away with the wrong lesson.

In spite of all the evidence – most recently, the tragic Deep Horizon spill – offshore drilling proponents tell us that drilling can be safe and it can be responsible. What happened in the Gulf, they say, is a freak event. An aberration.

This disregards the facts. Over the last decade, according to federal statistics, there have been 172 spills of at least 2,100 gallons in the Gulf alone. We all know about the big spills, but there are smaller- and medium-sized spills too. The fact is that no amount of regulation can prevent these tragedies.

The real take away from this disaster is that our energy policy is fatally flawed and dangerously out-dated. We simply cannot continue to rely upon finite, dirty energy resources that endanger American communities, pollute our planet, and force us to send \$1 billion overseas every day.

The word fossil means archaic. Petroleum is not the fuel of the 21st century. The sooner we realize this, the better.

Our nation holds just 3 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, and accounts for 25 percent of global consumption. The Energy Information Administration estimates that opening all

shores – all shores – to drilling would amount to no more than a few hundred thousand barrels per day, translating to a few tablespoons of gasoline per American vehicle.

With such a small portion of the world's oil reserves, we will never meet our growing energy demand by drilling. Opening up our shores to drilling merely will put our pristine coasts in jeopardy, whether it's the Gulf Coast, Atlantic Coast, or Pacific Coast.

So instead of repeating “Drill Baby Drill” and falling back on our own dependency on fossil fuels, I urge my Republican colleagues to support a policy that invests in a 21st century clean energy economy that will create thousands of new jobs, billions in new wealth, and help protect our air and water from pollution.